

CLAIMS

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is as follows:

- 1 1. A method of operating a digital communication
2 network having a plurality of nodes which have a
3 locally hierarchical relationship, comprising the
4 steps of:
5 detecting a condition at a first node and
6 communicating the condition to a trusted second
7 node locally higher in said hierarchical
8 relationship;
9 collecting information regarding said
10 condition through nodes at the same or higher
11 hierarchical level as said trusted second node;
12 and
13 controlling a response at said first node in
14 response to said information.
- 1 2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
2 communicating is performed over said digital
3 communication network separately from user data
4 communications.
- 1 3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
2 communicating and said controlling step are
3 performed by user transparent communications over
4 said digital network.
- 1 4. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
2 communicating and said controlling step are
3 performed at bit rates of at least 10 Gbps.

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1 5. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein said
2 communicating and said controlling step are
3 performed preferentially to said user data
4 communications.

1 6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
2 controlling step establishes a virtual private
3 network.

1 7. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
2 controlling step implements at least one of a
3 mandatory access control policy and a
4 discretionary access control policy.

1 8. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
2 communicating establishes a trust level for a node
3 of said digital network.

1 9. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
2 communicating establishes a secure session between
3 contiguous nodes of said digital network.

1 10. A method as recited in claim 1, including the
2 further step of detecting a foreign security
3 policy manager connection.

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